JOHN RUTTER

A Christmas Festival



THE CAMBRIDGE SINGERS
FARNHAM YOUTH CHOIR
ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Collegium RECORDS



IN RECENT YEARS the annual Christmas Festival concerts I have been privileged to conduct in London with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra have given me particular pleasure, not least the experience of hearing a Royal Albert Hall audience of over 5000 people sing the two great Christmas hymns which frame the event.

This recording brings together some of the artists and music featured in our concerts. Much of the music has been specially written or arranged, and is recorded here for the first time. In addition to my own choir the Cambridge Singers, I am delighted that our performers include the marvellous Farnham Youth Choir, and three of my all-time favourite soloists, Elin Manahan Thomas (whose fluency in Welsh puts me to shame), Clara Sanabras (ditto Spanish), and my long-time friend and founder-member of the Cambridge Singers, Melanie Marshall. Thanks to the miracles of recording technology, we have also been able to add the majestic sound of the Royal Albert Hall organ, so masterfully played by Dr John Birch.

I have been associated with the music of Christmas for many years now. It has always brought me great joy, and I am sure it always will.

JOHN RUTTER

A Christmas Festival

The Cambridge Singers
Farnham Youth Choir (Director: David Victor-Smith)
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Leader: Marcia Crayford)

with:
Elin Manahan Thomas *soprano*
Clara Sanabras *soprano*
Melanie Marshall *mezzo-soprano*

conducted by John Rutter

The Cambridge Singers
Sopranos: Isabelle Adams, Grace Davidson, Julia Doyle, Juliet Fraser, Emilia Hughes, Kirsty Hopkins, Louise Kateck, Alexandra Kidgell, Charlotte Mobbs
Altos: Ruth Gibbins, Eleanor Harries, Frances Jellard, Martha McLorinan, Sarah Shorter, Abigail Smetham, Elizabeth Weisberg
Tenors: Ben Breakwell, Tom Cockett, John Harte, Tom Hobbs, David Knight, Richard Rowntree, Simon Wall
Basses: Neil Bellingham, James Birchall, Ben Davies, Tim Dickinson, Sam Evans, Ed Grint, Jon Saunders, Reuben Thomas

Note: words credits are given at the end of each text.

Total playing time: 73' 15"

1 **O come, all ye faithful** (4' 09")
Fanfare: John Rutter
Hymn: ascribed to J. F. Wade (1711–86)
Orchestration, and last-verse arrangement: David Willcocks
(CS, FYC, RPO)

2 **Gaudete *(Rejoice)*** (1' 49")
from Piae Cantiones, 1582
Arrangement: Michael Neaum
Orchestration: John Rutter
(FYC, RPO)

3 **The Shepherd's Carol** (2' 44")
Bob Chilcott (*b.* 1955)
(CS)

4 **Nos galan *(New Year's Eve)*** (1' 57")
Welsh traditional carol
arranged by John Rutter
(Elin Manahan Thomas, CS, RPO)

5 **I wonder as I wander** (3' 43")
Appalachian carol, collected by J.J. Niles (1892–1980)
arranged by John Rutter
(Melanie Marshall, Andrew Williams (viola solo), RPO)

6 **Ave Maria** (3' 02")
John Rutter (*b.* 1945)
(CS, RPO)

7 **Tomorrow shall be my dancing day** (2' 50")
English traditional carol
arranged by John Rutter
(FYC, RPO)

8 **Rejoice and be merry** (2' 36")
John Rutter
(CS, RPO)

9 **El Noi de la Mare *(The Son of the Virgin)*** (3' 14")
Catalan traditional carol
arranged by John Rutter
(Clara Sanabras, RPO)

10 **A Christmas Overture** (7' 23")
Nigel Hess (*b.* 1953)
(RPO)

11 **Born on a New Day** (2' 43")
John David (*b.* 1946)
arranged by Peter Knight
(CS, RPO)

12 **Magical Kingdom** (3' 28")
John Rutter
(FYC, RPO)

13 **Mary's Boy Child** (4' 24")
Jester Hairston (1901–2000)
arranged by John Rutter
(Melanie Marshall, RPO)

14 **Esta noche *(This night)*** (2' 02")
Spanish traditional carol
arranged by John Rutter
(Clara Sanabras, CS, RPO)

15 **Sleigh Ride** (5' 44")
Frederick Delius (1862–1934)
(RPO)

16 **The Virgin Mary had a baby boy** (4' 08")
Caribbean traditional carol
arranged by John Rutter
(Melanie Marshall, FYC, CS, RPO)

17 **New Year** (4' 17")
John Rutter
(CS, RPO)

18 **I wish you Christmas** (4' 26")
John Rutter
(FYC, CS, RPO)

19 **Hark! the herald angels sing** (4' 05")
Opening fanfare: John Rutter
Hymn: Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47)
Orchestration, and v.3 arrangement: David Willcocks
Closing fanfare: David Willcocks
(FYC, CS, RPO)

20 **Have yourself a merry little Christmas** (3' 01")
Hugh Martin (b. 1914) and Ralph Blane (1914–95)
arranged by John Rutter
(Melanie Marshall, John Anderson (oboe), RPO)

The John Rutter compositions included in this album are available in print as follows:
Ave Maria is published worldwide by Oxford University Press; *Rejoice and be merry*, *New Year*, and *I wish you Christmas* are published in the USA by Hinshaw Music, Inc. and by Oxford University Press in other countries; *Magical Kingdom* is published worldwide by Hinshaw Music, Inc. (UK agents Chamberlain Music).

1 O come, all ye faithful

This renowned Christmas hymn—*Adeste, fideles* in its original Latin—first appeared in print in an English collection of 1751, *Cantus diversi*. The compiler, J. F. Wade, was a Catholic music copyist based in Douai, who may himself have composed the tune; the anonymous text is a poetic expansion of the phrase 'Venite, adoremus Dominum' which is proper to Christmas Day matins. During the nineteenth century the text was translated into English and the music underwent successive alterations, the hymn not assuming its familiar present form until it was included in *The English Hymnal* in 1906.

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him
Born the King of Angels:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten, not created:

See how the shepherds,
Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps:

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God
In the highest:

(Latin 18th century, tr. F. Oakeley and others)

2 Gaudete *(Rejoice)*

The source of this spirited carol is a Finnish published collection of 1582, *Piae Cantiones*, which contains 74 (mostly) sacred songs said by the compiler, Jacobus Finno, to have been widely sung in Nordic cathedral schools. Several other items in this valuable collection have become Christmas 'standards': *Personent hodie*, *In dulci jubilo*, *Of the Father's heart begotten*, *Resonent in laudibus* and (to a secular text) *Good King Wenceslas*. Michael Neaum's attractive arrangement of *Gaudete*, which preserves the original harmonies of the refrain, was written for the Cantamus Girls' Choir in the 1970s.

Gaudete, gaudete!
Christus est natus
Ex Maria Virgine:
Gaudete.

Tempus adest gratiae,
Hoc quod optabamus,
Carmina laetitiae
Devote reddamus.

Deus homo factus est,
Natura mirante,
Mundus renovatus est
A Christo regnante.

Ezechielis porta
Clausa pertransitur;
Unde Lux est orta,
Salus invenitur.

Ergo nostra concio
Psallat iam in lustro;
Benedicat Domino:
Salus Regi nostro.

(Piae Cantiones, 1582)

(Rejoice, rejoice! Christ is born
Of the Virgin Mary, rejoice!

The time of grace is here,
That we have desired,
Let us devoutly offer
Songs of rejoicing.

God is made man,
Nature marvels;
The world is renewed
By Christ who is King.

Ezekiel's closed gate
Has been passed through;
There salvation is found,
Where the light shines.

Therefore let our song
Now sound to purify us;
May the Lord be blessed;
Salvation to our King.)

3 The Shepherd's Carol

Bob Chilcott's musical career began as a chorister at King's College, Cambridge, and this, one of the loveliest of his carol settings, was written for its 2000 Christmas Eve Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. The anonymous modern text was suggested to him by the Dean.

We stood on the hills, Lady,
Our day's work done,
Watching the frosted meadows
That winter had won.

The evening was calm, Lady,
The air so still,
Silence more lovely than music
Folded the hill.

There was a star, Lady,
Shone in the night,
Larger than Venus it was
And bright, so bright.

Oh, a voice from the sky, Lady,
It seemed to us then
Telling of God being born
In the world of men.

And so we have come, Lady,
Our day's work done,
Our love, our hopes, ourselves
We give to your son.

(Anon.)

4 Nos galan *(New Year's Eve)*

The merry, dance-like tune of this carol is widely familiar to the text *Deck the hall with boughs of holly*, but the original Welsh text is unrelated to it, though it does share a New Year theme. Words and music first appeared in a 1784 collection *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards* edited by the Welsh harpist Edward Jones.

Oer yw'r gwr sy'n methu caru
Hen fynyddoedd annwyl Cymru.
Iddo ef a'u car gynhesaf,
Gwyliau llawen flwyddyn nesaf.

I'r helbulus oer yw'r biliau
Sydd yn dyfod yn y gwyliau.
Gwrando bregeth mewn un pennill:
Byth na waria fwy na'th ennill!!

Oer yw'r eira ar Eryri
Er fod gwrthban gwlanen arni.
Oer yw'r bobl na ofalan
Gwrdd a'i gilydd ar Nos Galan.

(Cold is he who cannot love
The dear old mountains of Wales.
He who loves them most warmly
Will have a merry holiday next year.

To the disorganised, cold are the bills
Which mount up in the holiday season.
Here's a sermon in just one sentence:
Don't spend more than you earn!

Cold is the snow on Snowdon
Even though she is snuggled in her woollen blanket.
Cold are those who do not make the effort
To gather together on New Year's Eve!)

(tr. Elin Manahan Thomas)

5 I wonder as I wander

The musical folklorist and singer John Jacob Niles collected this haunting carol in the Appalachian mountains in 1933 (he later claimed it was an original composition of his own, which cannot be verified). It was first published in his collection *Songs of the Hill Folk* in 1934 and soon became widely known, both from Niles's own solo performances and in choral arrangements. The present version, written for the 2004 Christmas Festival, is for mezzo-soprano, harp and strings, with an important part for solo viola.

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus, the Saviour, did come for to die
For poor or'nery people like you and like I:
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cows' stall,
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,
And the promise of ages it then did recall.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing:
A star in the sky, or a bird on the wing;
Or all of God's angels in heaven to sing,
He surely could have had it, 'cause he was the King!

(The first verse is repeated.)

(Appalachian carol, coll. J. J. Niles)

6 Ave Maria

The words of the *Ave Maria* are those of the Angel Gabriel in St Luke's gospel as he brings Mary the news that she will be the mother of Christ, and there are innumerable musical settings. The present one, written in 2006, was dedicated to Lydia Smallwood, whose premature death in that year deprived the Cambridge musical community of one of its best-loved and most valued members.

Ave Maria, gratia plena; Dominus tecum:
benedicta tu in mulieribus. Alleluia.

(The Angelic Salutation)

(Hail, Mary full of grace! the Lord is with you;
you are blessed among women. Alleluia.)

7 Tomorrow shall be my dancing day

This carol, which, in its eleven-verse entirety, outlines the whole life of Christ, was one of the jewels of an important English collection, William Sandys's *Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern* of 1833. The age-old connection between religion and the dance is clearly to the fore, both in the text and in the waltz-like melody. John Rutter's arrangement for upper voices was originally written with harp accompaniment as part of his carol cycle *Dancing Day* (1973); he later made the present version with orchestra.

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day:
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance.
Sing O my love, O my love,
My love, my love;
This have I done for my true love.

Then was I born of a virgin pure,
Of her I took fleshly substance;
Thus was I knit to man's nature,
To call my true love to my dance.

In a manger laid and wrapped I was,
So very poor, this was my chance,
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass,
To call my true love to my dance.

(The first verse is repeated.)

(English traditional carol)

8 Rejoice and be merry

The occasion for this new setting of a traditional English text was a request in 2003 from the Washington Cathedral Choral Society for a carol accompanied by brass ensemble and handbells (replaced by glockenspiel and tubular bells in this recording). The dedicatee was Dr J. Reilly Lewis, longtime director of the choir.

Rejoice and be merry in songs and in mirth;
O praise our Redeemer, all mortals on earth:
For this is the birthday of Jesus our King,
Who brought us salvation: his praises we'll sing.

A heavenly vision appeared in the sky;
Vast numbers of angels the shepherds did spy,
Proclaiming the birthday of Jesus our King,
Who brought us salvation: his praises we'll sing.

Likewise a bright star in the sky did appear,
Which led the Wise Men from the east to draw near;
They found the Messiah, sweet Jesus our King,
Who brought us salvation: his praises we'll sing.

And when they were come, they their treasures unfold,
And unto him offered myrrh, incense and gold.
So blessed for ever be Jesus our King,
Who brought us salvation: his praises we'll sing.

(English traditional carol)

9 El Noi de la Mare *(The Son of the Virgin)*

This tender Catalan lullaby, believed to be of sixteenth-century origin, is a folk-song with seasonal text, its style reflecting the musical culture of Catalonia. Devotees of the guitar will recognize the melody as a favourite John Williams recital encore (it was originally transcribed by the great Spanish guitarist Miguel Llobet). The present arrangement was written especially for Clara Sanabras, soloist in the 2006 Christmas Festival.

Qué li darem a n'el Noi de la Mare?
Qué li darem que li sápiga bo?
Li darem panses en unes balances,
Li darem figues en un paneró.

Qué li darem al fillet de Maria
Qué li darem a l'hermós Infantó?
Panses i figues i nous i olives,
Panses i figues i mel i mató.

Tam patantam, que les figues son verdes
Tam patantam, que ja madurarán.
Si no maduren el dia de Pasqua,
Madurarán en el dia del Ram.

(Catalan traditional lullaby)

(What will we give to the son of the mother,
What shall we give him that he would like?
Dates and figs, nuts and olives
Dates and figs and honey and cheese.

What shall we give the Son of Mary
What shall we offer that beautiful child
Dates and figs, nuts and olives
Dates and figs and honey and cheese.

Tam patantam, those figs are still green
Tam patantam, but they will soon ripen
If they haven't by Easter
They will have done by Palm Sunday.)

(tr. Clara Sanabras)

10 A Christmas Overture

Nigel Hess is a multifaceted composer and conductor active mainly in the area of music for films, television and the theatre. He studied music at Cambridge University, where he was Music Director of the Footlights Revue; from 1981–5 he served in the same role for the Royal Shakespeare Company, writing music for over twenty productions. His subsequent career includes music for many major films and television dramas, together with a growing catalogue of concert music.

His vivacious and colourful *Christmas Overture*, commissioned for the 2007 Christmas Festival, proved an instant success with audience and orchestra alike. Traditional carols, skilfully juxtaposed and interwoven, provide the thematic material. They are, in order of their appearance: *Ding dong! merrily on high*, *Deck the hall*, *Il est né le divin enfant* (enchantingly scored for pastoral woodwind), *Infant holy, infant lowly* (lyrical cor anglais and violin solos), *Personent hodie* (a fanfare-like call to attention), *We wish you a merry Christmas* (a jovial fugue), and *Angels, from the realms of glory* which brings the overture to a majestic close. Fragments of other carols appear along the way to enrich the texture of what is surely one of the most attractive orchestral pieces yet written for the festive season.

11 Born on a New Day

John David, a Cardiff-born songwriter, record producer and instrumentalist, originally wrote this abidingly fresh and affecting piece as a secular song—called *New Day*—on the theme of the environment, and it was popularized by the King's Singers in the 1980s. One of the present members of the group, Philip Lawson, followed the centuries-old *contrafactum* tradition in writing an alternative sacred text as recorded here, creating a captivating new seasonal song. Peter Knight's arrangement for the King's Singers (slightly adapted here for mixed voices and strings) is nothing less than a classic.

You are the new day.
Meekness, love, humility,
Come down to us this day:
Christ, your birth has proved to me
You are the new day.

Quiet in a stall you lie.
Angels watching in the sky
Whisper to you from on high:
'You are the new day.'

When our life is darkest night,
Hope has burned away,
Love, your ray of guiding light,
Show us the new day.

Love of all things great and small,
Leaving none, embracing all,
Fold around me where I fall,

Bring in the new day.

This new day will be a turning point
For every one,
If we let the Christ-child in,
And reach for the new day.

Christ the Way, the Truth, the Life,
Healing sadness, ending strife,
You we welcome, Lord of Life.
Born on a new day,
You are the new day.

(Philip Lawson)

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12 Magical Kingdom

The sense of wonder and enchantment experienced by children at Christmas time provided the inspiration for this song, which was written in 2003 for the noted London choir Children's Voices, whose director June Keyte has encouraged numerous composers including Sir Peter Maxwell Davies to write for her choir.

Everyone has their own magical kingdom,
High on a hilltop and touching the sky;
Somewhere you go when you wish on a
rainbow,
Somewhere you can fly.
Everyone has their own magic adventures,
Strange and exciting and scary and new,
Everyone dreams their own magical stories:
You could dream them too.

Once upon a time
In the land of make believe,
All the world was young
And wishes still came true,
There were dragons to slay,
Trumpets to play,
Battles to dream of winning,
And wicked giants to fight,
Wrongs to put right,
Life only just beginning.

That was long ago,
Maybe it was fairy tale;
Was it ever real or just a pantomime?
Keep on believing,
Keep on believing,
Just keep on believing
In once upon a time.

When the world keeps spinning round in
circles,
And your way seems impossible to find,
Look up high:
A castle in the air
Is waiting for you there
All in your mind.

Once upon a time . . .

That was long ago:
A time when you imagined things,
But they were all the loveliest things you ever
knew;
In that magical kingdom,

Your own magical kingdom:
The land of dreams come true.

(John Rutter)

13 Mary's Boy Child

Many choral musicians around the world remember Jester Hairston fondly. Descended from plantation slaves, he rose from rural poverty in North Carolina to become a widely recognized songwriter, arranger (mainly of spirituals), singer, choral director, and film actor. He wrote *Mary's Boy Child* in 1956, and it immediately became a No. 1 hit in a recording by Harry Belafonte. The relaxed gracefulness of its melody and aptly unadorned retelling of the Christmas story in its lyric have gained it a lasting place in the repertoire.

Long time ago in Bethlehem
So the Holy Bible say,
Mary's Boy Child, Jesus Christ,
Was born on Christmas Day.

Hark, now hear the angels sing,
A new King born today,
And man will live for evermore,
Because of Christmas Day.
Trumpets sound and angels sing,
Listen to what they say:
That man will live for evermore
Because of Christmas Day.

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
They see a bright new shining star,
They heard a choir sing,
The music seemed to come from afar.
Now Joseph and his wife Mary
Come to Bethlehem that night,
They found no place to bear the child,
Not a single room was in sight.

Hark, now hear the angels sing . . .

By and by they find a little nook
In a stable all forlorn,
And in a manger cold and dark,
Mary's little boy was born.
Long time ago in Bethlehem,
So the Holy Bible say,
Mary's Boy Child Jesus Christ,
Was born on Christmas Day.

Hark, now hear the angels sing . . .

(Jester Hairston)

14 Esta noche *(This night)*

The infectious dance-like spirit of this anonymous folk-carol has made it a favourite both in Spain and in the New World: versions have been found in Chile, Puerto Rico and Peru. The present arrangement was written for the 2006 Christmas Festival.

Esta noche nace un niño entre la escarcha y el
hielo
Quien pudiera niño mío vestirte de terciopelo
Alegrí, alegrí, alegría
Alegrí, alegrí, que placer
Esta noche nace un niño en el portal de Belén.

La virgen esta lavando con un poco de jabón
Se le picaron las manos, manos de mi corazón
Alegrí, alegrí, alegría
Alegrí, alegrí, que placer
Esta noche nace un niño en el portal de Belén.

(Tonight a child is born between the frost and the ice
If only I could, little child, dress you up in velvet!
Happiness and joy,
Happiness and pleasure,
For tonight a child is born in a manger in Bethlehem.

The Virgin is washing clothes with a little bit of soap
Her hands slightly coarse, those beautiful loving hands!
Happiness and joy,
Happiness and pleasure,
For tonight a child is born in a manger in Bethlehem.)

(tr. Clara Sanabras)

15 Sleigh Ride

Throughout his life Delius felt a strong affinity with Norway, spending summers there in the 1880s and forming an important friendship with Grieg. He later reminisced of spending Christmas Eve 1887 at the composer's home in Bergen, where he played the original piano version of his *Sleigh Ride*—probably much to Grieg's pleasure, because Delius's portrayal in music of a lively sleigh ride which eventually comes to rest in the stillness of a northern winter's night is clearly inspired by Grieg's style without being a slavish copy. Delius—who was still a student at the Leipzig Conservatory—made the familiar orchestral version a year or two later, and, helped by the advocacy of Sir Thomas Beecham, the piece has remained deservedly popular.

16 The Virgin Mary had a baby boy

Edric Connor (1915–68) was a singer, folk-song collector and (like Jester Hairston) actor, who assembled a collection of the traditional songs of his native Trinidad in 1945. This was later published after he moved to England, and his own performances helped to popularize the songs in it, including *The Virgin Mary had a baby boy*, which is in the calypso style. The present arrangement was written for the massed forces of Melanie Marshall, adult and children's choirs, audience and orchestra in the 2004 Festival.

The Virgin Mary had a Baby Boy,
The Virgin Mary had a Baby Boy,
The Virgin Mary had a Baby Boy,
And they say that his name was Jesus.

He come from the glory,
He come from the glorious kingdom,
He come from the glory,
He come from the glorious kingdom.

Oh yes, believer,
Oh yes, believer,
He come from the glory,
He come from the glorious kingdom.

The angels sang when the baby born,
The angels sang when the baby born,
The angels sang when the baby born
And they said that his name was Jesus.

He come from the glory . . .

The shepherds trembled at the angels' word,
The shepherds trembled at the angels' word,
The shepherds trembled at the angels' word,
When they heard that his name was Jesus.

He come from the glory . . .

The wise men saw where the baby born,
The wise men saw where the baby born,
The wise men saw where the baby born,
And they say that his name was Jesus.

He come from the glory . . .

So everyone they start to dance and sing,
So everyone they start to dance and sing,
So everyone they start to dance and sing,
For the baby whose name was Jesus.

He come from the glory . . .

(Caribbean traditional carol)

17 New Year

This, one of the few carols celebrating the coming of the new year, was written in 2006 at the request of the organist and choir of Sandringham Church, who wished to offer a seasonal tribute to HM The Queen in her 80th birthday year. It was first performed in Sandringham Church, in the presence of the Queen and members of the royal family, on New Year's Eve 2006. The version with orchestra followed in 2007.

Turn your eyes to the light;
Cast away the works of darkness, let them go:
Turn your eyes to the light.
Turn your face to the sun;
Feel the warmth, the hope of new beginnings
With each new year.
The light was always there, if we could but see it;
And warmth was in the air, if we'd known how to feel.
Turn your eyes to the light,
Turn your face to the sun:
New light, new hope, New Year.

Turn your ears to the sound;
Somewhere near, a voice is calling:
Hear the news,
Turn your ears to the sound.
Turn your heart to the love;
Christ is come to bring the world new life.
The voice is always there, if the world will hear it;
And love is always there, if your search in your heart.
Turn your ears to the sound,

Turn your heart to the love:
New life, new love, new year.
New life, and love, and light, and hope,
This good New Year.

(John Rutter)

18 I wish you Christmas

John Rutter wrote this new Christmas song (one of his few secular seasonal songs) for the 2006 Festival.

I wish you starlight on fields of snow,
The winter's morning light and evening's glow;
I wish you candles that shine from ev'ry tree
So all the world can see
The light that there could be.
I wish you music, I wish you song,
With voices echoing, joyous and strong;
I wish you church bells, ringing true and clear;
I wish you Christmas, a merry Christmas,
A merry Christmas to remember all the year.

Old friends smiling, thinking of times gone by;
Young friends laughing:
Christmas is here,
Spirits are bright, and hopes are high.

I wish you loved ones around your fire;
May Christmas bring you all your heart's desire.
I wish you children to make the season new,
With dreams you help come true,
Just like it was for you.

I wish you blessings, I wish you love,
The sound of angel choirs from high above;
I wish you laughter, happiness and cheer:
I wish you Christmas, a merry Christmas,
And may its joy and peace be with you through the year.

I wish you music, I wish you song;
I wish you harmony your whole life long;
The warmth of memories that long remain:
I wish you Christmas, a merry Christmas,
And may God bless you till we all shall meet again.

(John Rutter)

19 Hark! the herald angels sing

In common with many carols and Christmas hymns, *Hark! the herald angels sing* has come down to us in a form drastically altered from its original. Wesley's text of 1739—which began *Hark, how all the welkin rings, Glory to the King of Kings*—has been amended by various hands for doctrinal or poetic reasons, and Mendelssohn's music (which the composer said would 'never do to sacred words') was originally a male-voice chorus from a cantata written in 1840 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the invention of printing. None of this detracts from the splendour of the hymn as we now have it, and it provides a welcome reminder that Christmas is an inclusive festival where stylistic purity has never been a priority.

Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled:
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With the angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem:
Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!

Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of a Virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel:

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings
Risen with healing in his wings;
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth:

(Charles Wesley and others)

20 Have yourself a merry little Christmas

This brief and infinitely touching song was written by the then novice team of Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane for the 1944 MGM film *Meet Me in St Louis*; it has remained their most enduring creation, memorably sung in the film by Judy Garland playing Esther, a young girl cheering up her little sister as their family faces leaving the home they love in St Louis to move to an uncertain future in New York. Garland's performances of this song at troop concerts, coming at a time when many servicemen and women were parted from their families, reportedly brought her audiences to tears.

Have yourself a merry little Christmas,
Let your heart be light,
Next year all our troubles will be out of sight.
Have yourself a merry little Christmas,
Make the Yuletide gay,
Next year all our troubles will be miles away.

Once again as in olden days,
Happy golden days of yore,
Faithful friends who were dear to us
Will be near to us once more.

Some day soon we all will be together,
If the fates allow,
Hang a shining star upon the highest bough.
So have yourself a merry little Christmas now.

(Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane)



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